

In the Specification

Please amend the paragraph appearing at page 3, lines 16-31, as follows:

Certain embodiments of the present invention may provide one or more technical advantages over previous procurement techniques. The present invention may provide one or more buyers within an electronic marketplace environment with decision support to enhance their procurement experience. The present invention may enable buyers to achieve optimal or near optimal procurement results with relatively little (or possibly even no) user interaction. This not only reduces errors and their associated transaction costs, but may significantly increase the speed, efficiency, and overall effectiveness of the procurement process. Buyers may also develop confidence that the procurement decisions made using this decision support tool result in the best overall deal and that ~~they~~ the buyers are not being taken advantage of or otherwise missing out on significantly more favorable options. The present invention may provide buyers with substantially real-time visibility into real supplier availability constraints and into details needed to understand the issues, evaluate the alternatives, and facilitate procurement according to their needs. The present invention may further provide a user interface through which buyers may access intuitive and feature rich workflows in connection with such guided buying decision support.

Please amend the paragraph appearing at page 8, line 21 through page 9, line 10, as follows:

Once buyer 12 identifies a need for an item, the buyer 12 must typically make numerous decisions, possibly after significant inquiries and evaluation, before actually agreeing to purchase the item from a particular supplier 16. For example, one or more suppliers 16 might offer the item as a standard catalog item, one or more suppliers 16 might regularly manufacture the item to various buyer specifications, and one or more suppliers 16 might be able to custom manufacture the item for the first time based on buyer specifications. Buyer 12 may not know any suppliers 16 of the item, whether a supplier 16 has previously supplied the

item to buyer 12, or whether a supplier 16 has ever supplied the particular item to any buyer 12. Even if the buyer 12 knows which suppliers 16 supply the item and under what circumstances, buyer 12 may not know whether contracts covering the item exist with these suppliers 16 or the terms of such contracts. Buyer 12 may only have contracts with one or more suppliers 16 out of a group of possibly hundreds of suppliers 16 willing to supply the item. These contracts may be flexible as to quantities, prices, or other important terms. If no contract exists with a supplier 16, buyer 12 might need to decide whether a contract is desirable, for example, to obtain better pricing, delivery, and other terms in exchange for purchasing specified quantities over time. If the item must be custom-made, a contract might be required as a condition of sale. The item may be the subject of one or more auctions, inventory listing service (ILS) postings, or other supplier-initiated efforts to dispose of excess inventory, as described in U.S. Application No. 09/      ,        filed concurrently with the present application 09/841,320, now pending. Choosing the best overall alternative will often be far from trivial. According to the present invention, the marketplace 14 provides guided buying workflows to help facilitate and automate such decision-making processes.

Please amend the paragraph appearing at page 10, lines 16-31, as follows:

Buyer 12 first provides a parametric description of the needed items. FIGURES 3A and 3B illustrate an exemplary display 60 into which user 48 has provided procurement parameters 62 concerning a DRAM device. Parameters 62 may specify (1) a name or high level description of the item; (2) one or more required, desired, or other features, characteristics, or other potentially distinguishing aspects of the item; (3) a required, desired, minimum, or other quantity of the item; (4) a required, desired, minimum, or other condition of the item, such as whether it should be new, refurbished, or used; (5) a required, desired, minimum, or other quality rating for the item; (6) a required, desired, last acceptable, or other delivery date for the item; (7) a required, desired, or furthest acceptable delivery location for the item; (8) a required, desired, or other supplier type for the item, such as whether the supplier 16 should be a manufacturer,

distributor, or possibly another buyer 12 that at this time is seeking to dispose of its excess inventory; (9) a required, desired, minimum, or other quality rating for the supplier 16, such as is described in U.S. Application No. 09/\_\_\_\_, filed concurrently with this application 09/953,462, now pending; or (10) any other suitable information on which marketplace 14 may base procurement decisions and recommendations.

Please amend the paragraph appearing at page 11, lines 14-32, as follows:

In one embodiment, in response to receiving suitable procurement parameters 62 from buyer 12, the marketplace 14 uses one or more planning engines 36, manager 46, and option generator 50 to determine one or more item-supplier combinations that are consistent with parameters 62. The combinations may then be provided to buyer 12 within a display or otherwise. For example, as shown in FIGURE 3C, marketplace 14 may provide the user 48 with a display 64 including one or more available options 66 determined according to parameters 62 provided using display 60 described above. If user 48 changes one or more parameters 62 within display 60, then marketplace 14 might determine different available options 66, such that user 48 is able to view in substantially real-time the impact any changed parameters 62 have on its procurement options. Within display 64, available options 66 may be displayed according to their overall desirability based on one or more parameters 62, according to any particular parameter 62 such as price, or in any other appropriate manner. While display 64 is described as being separate from display 60, one or more available options 66 may be provided within the same display 60 in which parameters 62 are entered. For example, this may make the impact of changing parameters 62 more readily apparent to user 48. The present invention contemplates available options 66 being provided to buyer 12 in any suitable manner. ~~Buyer 24~~ Buyer 12 may select an available option 66 to directly procure the needed items according to the specifics of the available option 66 that is selected.